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Mum's plea to health chiefs over 'midwife-led' maternity unit

'HORTON TEAM SAVED MY LIFE'

Hannah Somerville
hsomerville@nqo.com

A NEW mum whose life was saved during a traumatic birth at the Horton Hospital has implored health bosses not to proceed with "reckless" maternity cuts.

Sophie Hammond tore a major blood vessel while giving birth to her daughter Clementine last September and was stitched up by teams at the Banbury hospital.

Now the 30-year-old has called on Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust not to allow the maternity unit to become midwife-led.

The proposals put forward by OUH would see no specialists based at the hospital meaning anyone experiencing difficulties during pregnancy would have to go elsewhere.

Mrs Hammond said: "It is unthinkable nonsense to downgrade services which surely need augmenting instead.

"The aftermath of my daughter's birth was a very traumatic and difficult time for us, but it was made more bearable by being looked after by a brilliant team."

After her birth Mrs Hammond, from Bodicote, lost two litres of blood in about five minutes and was rushed into the operating theatre "within seconds" by doctors.

She said: "One of the consultants who looked after me told me that if it hadn't been for the swift action of the team on duty, he would dread to think what the outcome would have been.

"It is a sobering thought that I'm only alive today because of the presence of expert, skilled professionals.

"A retired Horton nurse I used to know colleagues referred to the ambulance journey from Banbury to the JR as 'the death run'.

"How can we consider ourselves a civilised society if we are taking backwards steps in the safe delivery of babies?"

In late July the trust confirmed it had been trying unsuccessfully since April and May to fill five vacant obstetric posts, and could have just three out of eight middle-grade doctors in obstetrics by the end of September.



Sophie Hammond with daughter Clementine, born at the Horton in September

Last year about 1,500 babies were born at the Horton.

Its current contingency plan involves operating temporarily as a midwife-led unit, with "high-risk" women taken to the John Radcliffe to give birth.

But Mrs Hammond, a church buildings officer for the Diocese of Oxford, said: "Surely the most logical, low-impact solution would be to rotate staff between the JR and the Horton.

"The conclusion I have come to is that there is no reason the hospital couldn't be a fully-staffed, well-regarded training facility if the trust so wished it.

"The message needs to get out to the general public, the stakeholders of the NHS, that their NHS is being insidiously dismantled right under their noses."

At the start of this month hundreds of people, including new and expectant mothers and Victoria Prentis MP, gathered in front of the Horton to protest against the plans.

Work has begun at the John Radcliffe to prepare for the possibility of extra beds being needed at the Women's Centre.

The trust said its "long-standing problems" in running an obstetric-led maternity unit were partly due to obstetric training being withdrawn in 2013 by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, which was due to the low numbers of births at the Horton.

Paul Brennan, director of clinical services at OUH, said the trust had been "working very hard" to attract new applicants and fill the roles.

He said: "We have got a good offer for doctors who want a role that offers some responsibility and also variety, and we are continuing to advertise."

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Fairs will give vital aid to jobseekers

JOB offers in Bicester and Banbury will be on show next month as two fairs are hosted in the district.

A wealth of opportunities will be available for jobseekers of all age, background or employment status and the fairs are free to attend.

Cherwell District Council lead member for estates and the economy Lynn Pratt said: "Our job fairs bring hundreds of employers and jobseekers together and have helped many of our residents take the next step in their careers.

"In a world where job applications are increasingly made online, face-to-face contact can often set candidates apart.

"This is a great way for those looking for work to talk informally to employers and discover types of work they might not previously have considered.

"They are also an opportunity for jobseekers build relationships with employment agencies so that they can be notified of future job postings."

The first job fair will be staged on Wednesday, September 14, at the Banbury Town Hall and will run from 4pm to 7.30pm.

The next will be held at Bicester Library in Franklins house, Crown Walk in Bicester, on Wednesday, September 28, from 5pm to 7pm.

For more information or to book a stand call 01295 221863 or visit the website cherwell.gov.uk/jobclubs.

Call for exhibitors

EXHIBITORS are wanted to showcase their growing talents at the Banbury Flower and Produce Show.

This year's show is on August 21 at Banbury Market Place.

The categories are: Fruit and Vegetables, Cut Flowers and Potted Plants, Floral Art, Cakes and Preserves, Children's Variety and Crafts.

If you are interested in taking part or want more information, contact info@banbury.gov.uk.

Community centre club aims to offer boys support



Jake Foster playing pool and Bradley Knight playing table tennis at the Hill Youth and Community Centre

A NEW club has been set up at a Banbury community centre to give boys a platform to speak about issues important to them.

The Hill Youth and Community Centre has welcomed the new group for those aged 11 to 16 to provide a safe space for them to take part in activities and discussions with friends.

The group is designed to build the confidence and awareness of the youngsters, and offers informal advice about drugs, alcohol, sexual health and body image.

As well as enjoying sports and social events, the boys will be able to discuss any other issues that may affect them.

It has been set up by housing association Sanctuary Housing, following the success of the centre's girls-only self-esteem group.

Sanctuary's neighbourhood partnerships manager Kate Winstanley said: "We always look to support community-led facilities which address the needs of our customers and so we're pleased to be continuing our partnership work with the Hill.

"We've already seen some fantastic projects and groups coming from the community centre, with many of our residents involved."

Members will also get the chance to meet different people from various walks of life, including nurses and farmers, who will aim to provide positive role models.

Sheena Gow, from the centre in Bretch Hill, said: "The group was set up at the request of the boys themselves and we are seeing the positive impact it is having on those who attend already."

The group meets on Thursdays between 7pm and 8.30pm.

For more information call the centre on 01295 266650.

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Council backs plans for 1,000 new homes

Application approved despite opposition but secretary of state will make final ruling

Naomi Herring
nherring@nqo.com

PLANS for more than 1,000 homes to be built near Salt Way in Banbury are one step closer after councillors gave their approval despite opposition.

The development – some which will be examined by central Government – could see 1,280 homes, a primary school, sports fields, a community centre and shops built off Bloxham Road.

Cherwell District Council planning committee paved the way for the development as it approved the plans put forward by Gallagher Estates and Gladman Developments Ltd.

The decision to approve 1,000 of the homes will now be put to the Secretary of State to make the final decision after a third party questioned the plans when they were originally submitted.

If it is found the proposal contradicts planning law it could still be rejected.

But lead member for planning Colin Clarke said in the local plan, which outlines future development for the area, the land has already been set aside for housing so it was the job of the council to make sure it was suitable. He added: "Each year we are tasked with delivering a minimum number of homes across the district as per Government targets; that figure is fixed and can't be changed which means we have some tough decisions to make.



Lead member for planning Colin Clarke

"If we don't meet the target on sites which we think are most suitable the Government will approve sites on appeal which could lead to speculative development and additional costs to the council.

"This site is included for housing provision in Cherwell's adopted local plan so any discussions as to how suitable the site is for development have already taken place and been agreed.

"In making our decision we were not debating if this area should be developed, as that has already been decided.

"What we had to do was determine if the plans put forward by the developer coincided with our vision for the site as per the Local Plan. In this instance, we agreed that they did and that is why we have recommended the application for approval."

The housing plans were put to councillors as two applications. One was approved for 280 homes to be built on land west of Bodicote Cricket Club and another for 1,000 homes, the school and community centre built on 52 hectares of land adjoining West Way.

Both developers will take on responsibility of building a spine road off a new junction with White Post Road.

Councillor Chris Heath said: "It is worrying that the link road would not be put in first, it would create a complete knot of traffic.

"There has not been enough forward planning and there are no dates of when any of this will happen."

The Secretary of State will look at the plans over the next few months and can choose to approve or reject plans, or put the decision back to the council's planning committee.



Nancy Homewood, Anne Burns and Val Hardiman from Larkrise care home in Banbury enjoying the celebrations

Party celebrates 90 years of care for elderly

NEARLY 150 care home residents and staff from across the county joined together to celebrate 90 years of support for the elderly.

The Orders of St John Care Trust (OSJCT), which runs 17 care homes in Oxfordshire, held their annual summer party which this year featured a street party theme.

To celebrate nine decades of the trust working in Oxfordshire, residents and staff held a parade wearing costumes typical of the fashion from one of the last nine decades.

Joining the celebrations at Didcot Civic Hall were Nancy Homewood, Anne Burns and Val Hardiman from Larkrise care home in Banbury.

The home's activities co-ordinator Lorraine Roberts said: "The fun day was a brilliant event.

"All of our residents dressed in flower power costumes, danced and sang along to the sixties hits. They all agreed that the day made them feel like they were really back in the swinging sixties, and they absolutely loved it."

The event, on July 21, also featured cream teas and music from Daisy Chain Productions, a duo who sang a selection of summer songs.

OSJCT assistant operations director for Oxfordshire Patsy Just said: "Our summer fun day is something residents really look forward to each year.

"Days like this are extremely important for our residents because they not only get everyone out and about, socialising with people from other homes from around the county, but they are also a very effective way of helping residents trigger memories from the past."

Man on run after arrest at palace

A BANBURY man arrested outside Buckingham Palace and charged with carrying knives and a "wire saw" has gone on the run.

John Bolton, 47, was arrested at Hyde Park Corner on Thursday, June 9, on suspicion of possessing an offensive weapon in public.

He was later charged with three counts of possessing a knife and one count of possessing a wire saw.

He was reportedly wearing an SAS-style beret and had a military radio when he was arrested, and allegedly told police he had been "guarding" Buckingham Palace in his car with his dog for the past five days.

Bolton, of East Street, Banbury, was released on bail and ordered to appear at Westminster Magistrates' Court on Thursday, August 4, but he never showed up.

The court confirmed over the weekend it had issued a warrant for his arrest for not answering bail.

Pocket-sized advice helps the homeless

New booklet produced by council aims to get people off the streets

Kieran Davey
kdavey@nqo.com

A POCKET guide which lists the support and services available to rough sleepers in North Oxfordshire has had more than 250 copies distributed since it was printed.

The free 40-page publication contains information for partner agencies, support centres and homeless people.

It includes emergency accommodation options, advice and support available within the community, addiction services, food and long-term housing options.



Lead member for housing John Donaldson

The guide has been put together by Cherwell District Council as part of its ongoing aim to reduce the number of people sleeping rough.

The council's lead member for housing, John Donaldson, said: "Although the numbers of rough sleepers in Cherwell is very low, we need to ensure any and all cases receive the maximum amount of support to get them off the streets and on the road to a brighter future.

"This guide provides all of the key and relevant information that people will need to help them on that path in a handy booklet that fits in the pocket.

"Since the introduction we have handed out more than 250 copies to partner agencies and support centres who have direct contact to people who are, or who are at risk of becoming, homeless.

"Not only does this help us to promote the services available more easily across a wider area but it provides a single point of reference that people can refer to at their own convenience."

Since being produced in June, the guide has been given to council officers who either work with or have the potential to engage with rough sleepers, so they can pass on the information.

It has also been shared with partner organisations including Thames Valley Police, the Beacon Centre and the Salvation Army branches in Banbury and Bicester.

As well as information about services the guide includes maps, contact numbers and addresses of relevant support services.

According to July figures from the district council, there were nine regular rough sleepers across North Oxfordshire.

For more information or to download a copy of the *Homeless Pocket Guide*, visit www.cherwell.gov.uk/roughsleepers.

Concerns as sex abuse inquiry judge resigns

THE Government needs to "get a grip" on the national inquiry into child sexual abuse after the latest judge in charge of it quit, councillors have said.

Ian Hudspeth, leader of Oxfordshire County Council, raised concerns that Dame Lowell Goddard's departure from the investigation would mean lessons learnt in Oxford from Operation Bullfinch would not be shared with the rest of the country.

The landmark operation by police and social services uncovered the rape and abuse of six young girls by seven men in an organised gang, an area the inquiry is expected to look at.

Dame Lowell Goddard is the third person to resign as head of the wide-ranging inquiry, which was set up amid claims of an establishment cover-up following allegations a paedophile ring operated in Westminster in the 1980s.

Andrew Gant, chairman of Oxford City Council's scrutiny committee, said: "The problem with an inquiry like this is it deals with things that happened years ago. The Government needs to get a grip on this as soon as possible."

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Farming's future

FARMERS and growers in Oxfordshire are being called on by the National Farmers Union (NFU) to give their views on plans for British agriculture post-Brexit.

Three consultation events will be held on Wednesday, August 24, for members to comment on an 'options paper' on shaping future farming policy.

The meetings will run from 7.30am to 10am at Sudbury House Hotel, Faringdon, from 1.30pm to 4pm at The ASM Stadium in Thame, and from 7pm to 10pm in The Church House in North Bar Street, Banbury. For more details or to book call 01730 711950.

White Stuff plan

A NEW branch of retailer White Stuff is set to arrive in High Street, Banbury over the coming months.

Replacing current occupiers Country Casuals and Viyella, the firm – which sells clothing, accessories and homeware – has applied to Cherwell District Council to change signage outside the property. It plans add three swan-neck lights over the door, as well as a new hanging sign.

The application was received in mid-July and is due to be decided on by Monday, September 12, at the latest.

Charity's '30th'

FAMILY support charity Home-Start is holding 30th birthday celebrations with users from Banbury and Chipping Norton.

The Britannia Road Children's Centre in Banbury will be open from 2pm to 5pm on Sunday, September 18, for family activities and refreshments.

People who wish to go can RSVP by September 9 by emailing info@home-startbanbury.org.uk.

Public spaces orders for county branded 'bizarre'



Councillor Dee Sinclair with one of the new Public Spaces Protection Order signs in Oxford

Group claims banning activities would squeeze character out of towns

Matt Oliver & Naomi Herring
moliver@nqo.com

TWO controversial banning orders proposed in Oxfordshire have been named among the worst in the country by a civil liberties group.

The Manifesto Club warned the 'public spaces protection orders' or PSPOs – proposed in Oxford and Banbury – were among several set to create "bizarre new criminal offences".

The rules are underpinned by laws introduced by the Government in October 2014, which allow councils to ban activities they say have a "detrimental effect" on public life.

Oxford City Council's plan to ban excessive noise, smoke and unauthorised mooring of boats from the city's waterways was singled out in a list of 20, along with Cherwell District Council's proposal to ban drunkenness, sleeping rough and begging from Banbury.

But the London-based Manifesto Club – which has previously campaigned on leafleting bans, dispersal powers and ID checks – branded the PSPOs a "busybodies' charter" and called for them to scrapped or dramatically scaled back.

The group is encouraging people to protest against PSPOs across the country this weekend.

Criticising the Oxford order, which could also restrict the number of dogs people are allowed to walk at once, it added: "The waterways of Oxford are hardly a den of criminal iniquity – they are calm, pleasant, albeit a little ramshackle, which is nice.

"These are spaces people live in: they set up tables next to their boats, drink alcohol on their boats in the evening, heat the boats with wood stoves, in one case selling quality cheeses from a boat window.

"Some of these may be moored illegally, which as one boater explained is because there are not sufficient mooring sites.

"But rather than provide more mooring sites, the council introduces a new order to allow them to move people on at a stroke.

"The measure will be very successful at squeezing elements of character and spontaneity out of city life."

The waterways PSPO in Oxford would cover the River Thames, the Cherwell and Oxford Canal, banning people from mooring boats at riverbanks without the landowner's permission, obstructing paths or the waterways, putting up structures or leaving rubbish and failing to control dogs.

A group has also been formed by local boaters to fight the new proposed rule, called PSPnO, who say the order would criminalise "normal and necessary boating activities".

In an address to councillors last month at a meeting in Oxford Town Hall, spokeswoman Sharyn Hyde said the order was "short-sighted, unworkable and likely to increase problems on Oxford's waterways".

In a written response Dee Sinclair, the executive board member for community safety, said: "I found our meeting with the PSPNo group very useful and constructive. I want to look at alternative solutions thoroughly and will review the position in six months, before any wider public consultation."



Independent school 'meeting standards'

AN INDEPENDENT school in Banbury has been found to be meeting standards in all areas following a visit from inspectors.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate found Carrdus School was meeting standards relating to quality of education as well as spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

Staff also met standards for the welfare, health and safety of pupils and the premises and accommodation at the school, as well as other areas.

The inspection team, led by Paul Spillane, observed a small sample of lessons and conducted formal interviews with pupils as well as examining samples of their work.

They also held discussions with teachers, senior members of staff and with the chairman of the board of governors. They observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period and attended registration sessions and assemblies. The school was last subject to a full inspection in 2010.

It was founded in 1952 and moved to its current site at Overthorpe Hall in 1970.

The school caters for youngsters from nursery until the end of year six and has 110 pupils on its roll.



Firefighters in breathing apparatus tackle the blaze at Newly Wed Foods

Firefighters tackle blaze in breadcrumb-making machine

A FIRE broke out in a machine used to make breadcrumbs at a food producers in Banbury on Monday night.

Fire crews were called to Newly Wed Foods in Lombard Way at about 7.15pm.

Firefighters wearing breathing apparatus used air-handling equipment to tackle the blaze, which was in a specialist machine used to dry and process breadcrumbs.

Banbury watch manager Simon Piper said: "Due to the expert knowledge of the on-site shift engineer and team leader, we were able to quickly access the area of the machine that was affected. This enabled us to to extinguish the fire and use the air-handling equipment built into the premises to remove the smoke."

Station manager David Bray said the incident highlighted the importance of having a well-drilled team of crew members.

He added: "The night shift at these premises did everything we would expect of them. Establishing that the fire was too big for them to bring under control themselves, they called 999, gave clear and concise information and ensured full evacuation of the staff."

No-one was injured.

Roadshow dates

ELECTRONIC roadshows will be held in Kidlington and Bicester after more than 100 devices were fixed by environmental officers in Banbury.

Cherwell District Council is inviting people to bring along unwanted items to be recycled and is encouraging their owners to think green.

The roadshows will be held at Exeter Hall in Kidlington this Saturday and Sheep Street in Bicester on Saturday, August 20.

Both events run from 9am to 1pm.

More than 100 devices, including a fridge-freezer and a tumble dryer, were handed in at the roadshow in Banbury's Market Place on July 9.

Summer party

INDEPENDENT traders in Banbury will be exploring the world of magic as part of an old town summer party.

Shop owners are encouraged to dress up as characters from Harry Potter for the event on Saturday, September 3.

Musicians will also perform to raise money for the Banbury and District Samaritans.

There will be Hogwarts-themed competitions with prizes and a fancy dress contest for children of all ages.

The party will run from 9.30am to 3.30pm.

Food fair fun

DELICIOUS demonstrations and local delicacies will come together once again for the Banbury Food Fair on Sunday, August 21.

The food and drink fair celebrates local traders and their produce and visitors can sample a few treats or watch many demonstrations.

The fair runs from 10.30am to 4.30pm in Banbury Market Place.

Picnic at park for summer festival

Hopes high for a sunny Aug 23, when Princess Diana Park will host event

Kieran Davey
kdavey@nqo.com

TUG of war, storytelling and woodland games will all be part of this year's annual Summerfest in Banbury.

The Sunshine Centre will host an afternoon of fun activities at Princess Diana Park on August 23, which is aimed at bringing at bringing together the local community.

Visitors are invited to bring their own food to enjoy in the park's picnic zone, or alternatively they can sample some of the delights provided by Naomi's Cafe.

The event is being supported by housing association Sanctuary Housing, Oxfordshire Play Association (OPA), Cherwell District Council and other Banbury charities.

OPA manager Martin Gillett said: "When organising Summer Fest we considered three key things for the local community, promoting healthy lifestyles, promoting spontaneous play while having fun for less money and inspiring to achieve.

"Events such as this are excellent initiatives for promoting the many benefits of playing outside in this age of technology and multi-TV channels.

"It is so important to remember the positive impact that being outside can have on the physical and mental wellbeing of children and families."

Activities will be free, but visitors are advised to bring some spare change for the raffle which will also be taking place.

Sanctuary's neighbourhood partnership manager Kate Winstanley said: "Last year's Summer Fest was a huge success so we are delighted to be supporting the running of this community-led event once again.

"As we continue to help our residents to live happy, healthy and fulfilled lives, we look forward to welcoming the community back once again for what is set to be another fun-filled event."

The event is funded by Sanctuary's community investment fund, supporting projects that benefit the housing provider's residents and local communities.

This year the fund has also helped pay for cooking and budgeting classes for residents at Banbury Foyer.

The Summer Fest takes place from 11am to 3pm.

Meet and a few veg at gardeners' social

ALLOTMENT holders will be celebrating at a party to celebrate National Allotment Week.

Spital Farm Allotments Association in Banbury is holding a 'Party on the Plot' on August 13 to encourage people to come and learn about the value of having an allotment on their doorstep.

There will be sales of plants raising money for Oxfordshire Mind, quizzes and games, and the chance to chat to allotment holders about growing food.

The local association, which has more than 80 members, is working alongside the National Allotment Society for the special week between August 8-14.

Spital Farm Allotments Association site secretary Alison Page said: "We really hope our party will be a huge draw, as we want to show how brilliant allotments are."

The event, in Thorpe Way, is free and runs 2-4pm.

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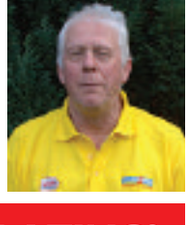
Consumer champions Which? have now joined the thousands of customers who recognise that Cloudy2Clear Windows really are a business that you can TRUST. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has received the coveted 'Which Trusted Trader' status after going through a rigorous accreditation process entirely focussed on customer service.

Group Managing Director Marcus McGee believes that Which? have endorsed Cloudy2Clear's long standing company policy of delivering the highest standards possible at all times. 'Our service is simple. If your double glazing has misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 25 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people money, although that obviously helps. Whilst a number of tradespeople perhaps don't focus on customer care as much as they should do, we make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle.

Locally Cloudy2Clear service the Oxford, Banbury & Abingdon areas and manager James Miller agrees that this approach is a major factor in his success. 'The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated as both my customers and, obviously a body as nationally important as Which? now recognise.'

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Scales of justice

BANBURY MAGISTRATES

Matthew Townsend, 18, of Warwick Road, Banbury, admitted possessing cannabis, a class B drug, with intent to supply, in Banbury on February 11. Fined £400 and ordered to pay a £40 victim surcharge and £85 costs.
James Brown, 43, of no fixed abode, admitted causing criminal damage by damaging a window belonging to Coventry Building Society in Banbury on July 28. Also admitted committing an offence while subject to a conditional discharge order. Committed to prison for two months and ordered to pay a £115 victim surcharge.
Catalin-Costel Codreanu, 21, of Marlborough Road, Banbury, admitted drink-driving in High Street, Banbury, on July 8. Had 73 micrograms of alcohol in 100ml of breath, exceeding the limit of 35 micrograms. Also admitted driving otherwise than in accordance with a licence and driving without insurance. Fined £300 and ordered to pay a £30 victim surcharge and £85 costs. Handed a 22-month driving ban.
Spencer Hartwell, 29, of Hilton Road, Banbury, admitted failing to report an accident in Woodgreen Road, Banbury, on March 19. Also admitted drink-driving in Woodgreen Road, Banbury, on March 19. Had 115 micrograms of alcohol in 100ml of breath, exceeding the limit of 35 micrograms. Handed a three-month sentence, suspended for 18 months, with a six-month alcohol treatment requirement and 100-hour unpaid work requirement. Also ordered to pay a £115 victim surcharge and £300 costs. Handed a 52-month driving ban.

OXFORD MAGISTRATES

Iulian Danila, 27, of no fixed abode, admitted drink-driving on the A4260 in Banbury on July 29. Had 94 micrograms of alcohol in 100ml of breath, above the legal limit of 35 micrograms. Fined £735 and ordered to pay a £74 victim surcharge and £85 costs. Banned from driving or holding a licence for 24 months.

Independent trust could take on county museum

Review into future of attraction looks at new ways to organise service

Matt Oliver
moliver@nqo.com

THE Oxfordshire Museum could be run by an independent trust after councillors launched a review of its future.

The review will look at new ways for Oxfordshire County Council to fund and organise the museum service, using £76,050 awarded to it by the Arts Council recently.

It came as Ed Vaizey, the former Culture Minister, called for the county's museums to be run at "an arm's length" so they would no longer be "tied up in council bureaucracy".

The Wantage MP said: "A museum is a visitor attraction that should be run by someone who knows what they're doing, in terms of attracting the public and giving them what they want, and should not be getting second-guessed by council officers.

"All over the country, I saw museums that want to be more fleet of foot get tied up in council bureaucracy and waiting for decisions that are overlaid with local politics.



The Oxfordshire Museum in Woodstock

"That is completely ridiculous, so I would encourage Oxfordshire to put its museums service into a trust at arm's-length."

The museum service celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

As well as the county museum in Woodstock, it also runs a storage centre in Standlake, Bishop's Palace in Witney and Swalcliffe Barn near Banbury. The museum in Woodstock hosts some of the county's most important artefacts, including a rare Iron Age mirror found in Didcot.

Lorraine Lindsay-Gale, the county council's cabinet member for culture and property, said the review could consider "all options".

She added: "What we hope this review will do is develop the service so that it will be in fit shape for the next 50 years. Spinning out museums to trusts is one option we will be looking at, it is something we have previously done with Cogges Manor Farm in Witney.

"At the moment we are very open-minded."

Mrs Lindsay-Gale said there was also a need to address issues in Standlake, where the storage facility is expected to be full within the next 18 months.

This was due to the large number of new developments in the county resulting in archaeological surveys, she added.

The councillor said: "Oxfordshire is a historic county with wonderful artefacts and stories to tell and one thing we want to do is make sure more of them are available for the public to see.

"If things are found and excavated they eventually end up with us, but we are running out of space at Standlake, so we either need to look at expanding that facility or try to disseminate more of what we have to other museums across the county. We want to get more of our history out there where people can see it."

Talks were ongoing with Oxford City Council about displaying more artefacts at the City of Oxford Museum, she said. Libraries could also host more displays.



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Changing lives for the better

Gannett Foundation has been giving grants to good causes since the 1990s

Callum Keown
ckeown@nqo.com



The team at Yellow Submarine; right, Oxtalk chairwoman Margaret Simpson and one of the listeners



SINCE the Gannett Foundation began ploughing money into good causes across Oxfordshire at the end of the 1990s thousands of lives have been changed for the better.

Once again applications have opened for slices of funding up to £10,000 each which are being given away to good causes by the *Banbury Cake's* parent company Gannett Media.

As charities across the county are urged to submit their cases we take a closer look at some of the best success stories as a result of the annual scheme.

■ In December 2012, the Gannett Foundation awarded Oxford charity Yellow Submarine a grant of £10,800 to open a cafe in Park End Street.

The charity – which has offered trips and activities to people with learning disabilities since it was founded in 2009 – wanted to open the cafe to offer young adults with learning disabilities a place to work or gain work experience.

Just over three years after it opened in April 2013 the cafe now employs 12 young adults and is the number one rated coffee shop in Oxford on website Trip Advisor.

Head of finance and compliance at the charity, Kate Sankey said: "We are so grateful to the Gannett Foundation, the grant helped us get off the ground and kick start the cafe which has grown and grown ever since.

."

■ Oxtalk is a charity providing a "talking newspaper" for more than 100 blind and visually impaired people across Oxfordshire each week.

The group dates back to 1979 and has been awarded funding from the Gannett Foundation both in 2003, when it received £2,500, and in 2013, when it was given a grant of £3,000.

Chairman Margaret Simpson said: "A few years back we needed to buy all new equipment as we were moving from the Radio Cherwell recording studio to the Oxfordshire Association for the Blind.

"Without that money from Gannett I am not certain how we would have managed as we previously, very gratefully, relied on the recording studio."

Despite the cash, Oxtalk is always on the hunt for new members to join the team in a number of roles, including technical officers who would be provided training.

Ms Simpson added: "We are always looking for volunteers.

"Members are growing and we have been around for 37 years – we would like to be around for 37 more."

For more information or to volunteer contact mail@oxtalk.org.uk To apply for a Gannett Foundation grant you must represent a registered charity or must not have received a grant from the foundation within the last two years.

Applications will only be accepted electronically on the approved application form with full answers and necessary materials given.

The closing date for applications is Friday, October 14 and forms can be found at banburycake.co.uk/gannettfoundation

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Slow but sure

DRIVERS in rural Oxfordshire have been urged to be patient with tractors during this year's harvest.

The National Farmers Union has appealed to all road users to be courteous and considerate until the season is over.

South east crops board chairman Matt Culley said: "It's a case of give and take – everyone has a right to be on the roads so it's important to be considerate and courteous to one another.

"Please be patient if you find yourself behind a slow moving tractor, a combine harvester or a cultivator. Farmers are working to deliver your daily bread and to produce food for livestock."

It was a blast

A SUMMER evening of jazz raised £4,600 for older people across Oxfordshire.

People brought hampers and picnic blankets to enjoy the outdoor 'Jazz at the Castle' event at Broughton Castle on Friday, July 22. All proceeds went to Age UK Oxfordshire. The main sponsor was Banbury solicitors firm Spratt Endicott.

Break-in bid

THIEVES attempted to break into a house in Hook Norton.

Thames Valley Police said it happened between 11pm on Friday, July 29, and 9am the following day. The thieves managed to get into the conservatory in Rectory Road but no further.

4,000 turn up at play day

Most successful event yet for organisers of activities for community in Banbury

Kieran Davey
kdavey@nqo.com

CHILDREN and families withstood a rainy start before the sun came out for a record-breaking play day in Banbury.

More than 4,000 piled into People's Park last month for the annual activities day, which this year had a carnival theme.

The event drew its inspiration from the forthcoming Olympics in Rio, and there was a Brazilian flair to activities.

There were drumming workshops, carnival arts, marshmallow toasting and bike-powered smoothie making on offer for visitors.

The fun and games were provided by the Cherwell Play Partnership Group, made of local agencies including Cherwell District Council, the Banbury Community Bus, Oxfordshire Play Association and the Sunshine Centre.

Council deputy leader George Reynolds said: "I'm delighted to see Banbury Play Day going from strength to strength, with thousands of parents and children turning out to make this year's edition an unprecedented success.

"The day is not just about play but about making friends and building community bonds.

"As we anticipate the Rio Olympics, the carnival spirit brought by this year's theme has proved a great way of bringing people together."



Face painting, drumming and reptile handling at Banbury Play Day

A district council spokesman confirmed the play day, which was held for the seventh time, was the best-attended yet.

The council's recreation and sport team also held exercise sessions, while there was also face painting and henna tattoos. The Brighter Futures Play Day will take place in Princess Diana Park in Bretch Hill on August 23, running from 11am to 3pm.

Banbury Cake

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Flights and fights of fancy

PETE'S DRAGON **(PG, 103 mins) Family/Fantasy/Drama/Action/Romance. Oakes Fegley, Bryce Dallas Howard, Wes Bentley, Karl Urban, Oona Laurence, Robert Redford, Levi Alexander. Director: David Lowery**

DO YOU believe in dragons? You certainly will by the conclusion of David Lowery's charming fantasy adventure, which reworks the beloved 1977 Disney musical of the same title as a rip-roaring story of devotion between an orphaned boy and his mythical protector.

State-of-the-art special effects magically bring to life the titular behemoth – a gargantuan fluffy green beast, whose inquisitive and playful demeanour suggests it might be the love child of Sulley from *Monsters, Inc* and Falkor the luckdragon in *The Neverending Story*.

Lowery's film possesses a similar sense of wonder as those two family favourites, underscored with life lessons about the self-sacrifice that springs naturally from an enduring friendship.

The lean script, co-written by the director and Toby Halbrooks, is punctuated with thrilling action sequences and doesn't saturate the screen with mawkish sentimentality.

A little boy called Pete (Levi Alexander) is orphaned in a road accident and left to fend for himself in the forest that buffers the community of Millhaven.

The helpless and tearful child is rescued from a pack of hungry wolves by a green dragon, which the boy names Elliott after a character in his picture book.

For six years, Pete (now played by Oakes Fegley) and Elliott grow up side-by-side beneath the forest's lush canopy until a logging operation led by lumber mill owner Jack Meacham (Wes Bentley) and his brother Gavin (Karl Urban) disturbs the peace.

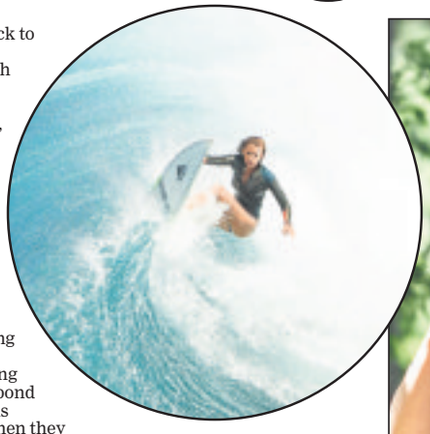
Jack's wife Grace (Bryce Dallas Howard), who is a forest ranger, discovers Pete living wild and spirits him back to civilisation.

The orphan bonds with her daughter Natalie (Oona Laurence) and father (Robert Redford), who claims to have seen a dragon many years ago.

However, the ranger cannot believe in the existence of mythical beasts, even when Pete draws a crayon picture of his best friend.

Pete's Dragon casts a heady spell by combining solid, old-fashioned storytelling with dazzling visuals. The delightful bond between boy and beast is lovingly sketched, so when they are separated, every fibre of our being roots for a rousing reunion.

Digital trickery melds seamlessly with live action, and terrific performances from the human cast are anchored by relative newcomer Fegley, whose expressive eyes reflect his pint-sized hero's aching loss.



THE SHALLOWS **(15, 86 mins) Thriller/Action/Horror. Blake Lively, Oscar Jaenada, Brett Cullen, Sedona Legge, Angelo Jose Lozano Corzo, Jose Manuel Trujillo Salas, Janelle Bailey. Director: Jaume Collet-Serra**

JUST when you thought it was safe to head back into the water, Spanish director Jaume Collet-Serra shreds nerves and nubile flesh using one of cinema's most ferocious and enduring villains – the great white shark.

The Shallows thrashes about in the wake of *Jaws* and its B-movie imitators, heightening tension by focusing on the efforts of one character to evade a voracious fish drawn into a beautiful Mexican bay.

This less-is-more approach adopted by screenwriter Anthony Jaswinski delivers plentiful edge-of-seat scares and affords the film some unexpected humour as the stricken heroine befriends an injured bird, which she christens Steven Seagull.

From the opening scenes of a young boy discovering an underwater camera containing footage of the shark in a blood-fuelled frenzy, Collet-Serra's film is a hoot.

Adrenaline-fuelled chases in the water are nail-biting, and briskly edited to ensure audiences cover their eyes as legs dangle tantalisingly in the water, waiting to be chomped.

The sun-kissed pins in question belong to Nancy Adams (Blake Lively), who has recently dropped out of medical school following the death of her mother (Janelle Bailey).

Nancy heads to the same secret beach in Mexico, where her pregnant mum surfed before she was born. Lively is on camera for almost the entire film and tugs heartstrings as Nancy is pursued by a shark and records a video message for her loved ones, telling them she intends to fight until her dying breath.

Predictability doesn't detract from the whoop-inducing thrill ride that Collet-Serra has constructed for us. Prepare to be sweaty by the end credits.



Bryce Dallas Howard is Grace, Wes Bentley is Jack and Oona Laurence is Natalie in Disney's *Pete's Dragon* and, left, Blake Lively as Nancy in *The Shallows*

Cake Bookworm

Harry Potter And The Cursed Child: Parts One And Two Script Book **by JK Rowling, John Tiffany and Jack Thorne is published in hardback by Little, Brown, priced £20 (ebook £9.99)**

ALMOST exactly five years since that tantalising glimpse of a grown-up Harry, Hermione and Ron at the end of *Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows: Part 2* – the final film adaptation of JK Rowling's seven books – the eighth story has already become the UK's biggest print book in a decade. Set 19 years on, the script book of the West End play *Harry Potter And The Cursed Child* (which premiered on July 30) is a refreshing 330 pages long (compared to *Deathly Hallows* 600+), and can be devoured in one sitting. After a while, you stop noticing you're just reading dialogue and the names of the characters, and the stage directions are so intense ("their minds in Hell"), they help conjure each scene. Like her female heroine, Rowling has teamed up with two guys – playwright Jack Thorne and director John Tiffany – to revisit her wizarding world in a new medium and it works.

Harry is struggling with fatherhood – his third child, Albus Severus (named for Dumbledore and Snape) is starting at Hogwarts and struggling to live up to his father's name.

He befriends Harry's erstwhile enemy Draco Malfoy's son Scorpius (just a really nice guy) and convinces him they 'somehow' should save a key Hogwarts student who died in the past. And that's all the plot you're getting...

Lie With Me **by Sabine Durrant is published in hardback by Mulholland Books, priced £14.99 (ebook £1.99)**

SABINE Durrant is the former assistant editor of *The Guardian* who has turned her hand to writing brilliantly creepy, psychological thrillers. With dark tales like *Gone Girl* being all the rage, *Lie With Me* has the makings of another best seller. That is, dislikeable characters, dysfunctional families, an unreliable narrator, and a claustrophobic world you just can't tear yourself away from. This clever tale leaves you feeling disturbed, shocked and questioning the classic ideas of good and evil; which of course is the sign of a fantastic read.

Augustown **by Kei Miller is published in hardback by Weidenfeld & Nicolson, priced £14.99 (ebook £6.99)**

KEI Miller's third novel invites us to Jamaica in 1982, to a poor suburb of Kingston called Augustown – which, the 2014 Forward poetry prize-winner assures in the preface, is a fictionalised version of the real August Town.

It's a brilliant, textured read that has the horrifying inevitability of a classical tragedy – but you can't stop before the end.

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Oxfordshire Listings

Events

THURSDAY

Clay Sculpture – Animal Pots (ages five to 12): Cornerstone Arts Centre, 25 Station Road, Didcot. Price includes one child and one accompanying adult. Children under eight must be accompanied by an adult. 1.30pm. £17.50 (includes £2.50 for materials and firing). 01235 515144.

Drayton Sequence Dance: Drayton Village Hall, Lockway, Drayton. 7.30pm. £2. 01235 531701.

Drop In and Create – 5,4,3,2,1... Action! (all ages): Cornerstone Arts Centre, 25 Station Road, Didcot. Inspired by the Shadowlight Artists exhibition in the gallery, drop-in creative activities will explore the moving image. These activities are unsupervised and designed for children and their adults to enjoy together. 10am. Free. 01235 515144.

Garden Visit: The Grange, Berrick Road, Chalgrove. Wallingford Gardening Club's summer visit to The Grange. This is a 10-acre plot with an evolving garden including herbaceous borders and a prairie with many grasses. There is a lake and also a brook running through the garden, which has a wildflower meadow. Vicky Farren will give a guided tour. Visitors welcome. 6.30pm. £6 incl tea and biscuits. 01491 836867.

Indoor Bowls (short-mat): Drayton Village Hall, Lockway, Drayton. 1.45pm. 01235 528402.

Rhythm and Dance: Rugrats and Halfpints, Beaumont Road, Banbury. 11am. Free with standard entrance price to centre. 01295 250060.

Sequence & Ballroom dancing: Woodstock Social Club, 44 Oxford Street, Woodstock. Learn 7.30-8.45pm. Practice until 10.30pm. £2. 01993 812094.

FRIDAY

Angel at Burford Summer Festival: The Angel at Burford, 14 Witney Street, Burford. A weekend full of family friendly fun – live music, beer festival and children's entertainment. 12pm. Free. 01993 822714.

Animation – Fantasy, Magic and Mayhem! (ages seven to 13): Cornerstone Arts Centre, 25 Station Road, Didcot. Make a magical mini animation and mix it up your own way. We teach you the skills, you just need to bring your imagination. 10.30am. £35. 01235 515144.

Bug Hunt Toddle: Environmental Education Centre, Sutton Courtenay Road, Sutton Courtenay. Bring your little ones for a short walk to hunt for creepy crawlies. Follow a trail and listen to a tale. Activities are designed for pre-school children. 10am. £4 per child, accompanying adults free. 01235 862024.

Noble Knights: Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, Park Street, Woodstock. Holiday Kids Club. Challenging workshop for seven to 10 year olds. No parents. Go back in time and win your spurs. Booking essential. 10am. £30. 01993 810214.

Witney Bytomic Taekwondo Classes: Wood Green School, Woodstock Road, Witney. 7pm. Monthly fees apply. 01844 281888.

SATURDAY

Andrew Marshall 'Photographing Wildlife in the UK': Blackwell's Bookshop, 48-51 Broad Street, Oxford. Andrew Marshall talks about how he came to be a wildlife photographer. 3pm. Free. 01865 333623.

Angel at Burford Summer Festival: The Angel at Burford, 14 Witney Street, Burford. 12pm. Free. 01993 822714.

Brailes Show: Brailes Village Hall and Recreation Ground, Lower Brailes, Banbury. Horse show, dog show, flower and produce show, vintage vehicles. 1.30pm. Adults £3.50; seniors £2.50; children £1.

Lampshade Making Workshop: Gluck, 8 London Street, Faringdon. Make a professional quality drum lampshade from our host of fabrics or vintage maps. 10am. £30. 07974 081526.

Print, Project, Collect: Pitt Rivers Museum, Entry via Oxford University Museum of Natural History, Parks Road, Oxford. The third in a series of three afternoon workshops covering different aspects of photography, on the themes of photographic prints and printmaking, lantern slides and projection, and photography collections and collecting practices. 2pm. £16. 01865 270927.

Ramblers walk: Bridge End car park, Dorchester on Thames. 6½-mile walk via Wittenham Clumps. Optional picnic stop at end. 10am. 01844 214469.

Regular Wallingford Walks: Town Hall, Market Place, Wallingford. General walks covering the rich history of the town, but also touching on the links with Agatha Christie and *Midsomer Murders*. 11am. £5, as donation to Wallingford Museum. 01491 836200.

Royal British Legion Women's Section Market Stall: Woodstock Social Club, 44 Oxford Street, Woodstock. Stalls and coffee morning. 10.05am. Free. 01993 811674.

Send a message SOS: Museum of the History of Science, Broad Street, Oxford. How did people communicate before the internet? Discover the revolution brought about by Samuel Morse who invented Morse code, and use the museum's bespoke telegraphic apparatus to unravel the mystery message. Drop-in. Suitable for ages 7+. 1pm. Free. 01865 277280.

Slimming World: Preston Road Community Centre, Midget Close, off Preston Road, Abingdon. 9.30am. £10 membership and £4.95 each week after. 07508202462.

SSNAP Charity Boot Camp: Oxfordshire Personal Training, 15-17 Elsfield Way, Oxford. Special 90-minute boot camp will include a variety of kettlebells, partner-based resistance work, bodyweight exercises and challenges for all abilities. For charity that supports sick and premature babies and their families. 9am. By donation. 07787 755825.

The Angel at Burford Summer Festival: The Angel at Burford, 14 Witney Street, Burford. 6pm. Free. 01993 822714.

Witney NCT Fun Day: Witney Corn Exchange, Market Square, Witney. Crafts, games, refreshments, soft play, face painting and bouncy castle. 10am. Free.

SUNDAY

Angel at Burford Summer Festival: The Angel at Burford, 14 Witney Street, Burford. 12pm. Free. 01993 822714.

Bicester and Kidlington Ramblers: St Bartholomew Church, Church Lane, Yarnton. Leisurely 10-mile circular walk including Thames Path. Picnic lunch. Leaders Chris and Derek Parish. 10am.

Bicester and Kidlington Ramblers: Market Place, Deddington. Leisurely five-mile walk in the Deddington area. Leader Sue Curtis. 2pm. 07986 813352.

Bytomic Taekwondo Classes: Brookside Primary School, Bucknell Road, Bicester. 5pm. 01844 281888.

Summer Sundays Cream Teas: The Reading Room, The Green, Combe. 2.30pm. £4.50 for cream tea (cake, scone and tea). 01993 898348.

Zumba: Drayton Village Hall, Lockway, Drayton. 7.30pm. £5. 01235 531180.

MONDAY

A Midsummer Night's Read book talk: Kidlington Library, 23 Oxford Road, Kidlington. Come and talk about books with other friendly readers. 11am. Free. 01865 373067.

Garden Science And Math Camp: Barracks Lane Community Garden, Barracks Lane (off Cumberland Road), Oxford. Headstart Garden Science and Math camp August 15-19 for children aged five to nine between 9.30am and 4pm. £35 per day. 01865 965045.

Indoor Bowls (short-mat): Drayton Village Hall, Lockway, Drayton. 1.45pm. 01235 528402.

Mums Meet Mondays: Rugrats and Halfpints, Beaumont Road, Banbury. 9.30am. £1 per child. 01295 250060.

Seniors (Gentle!) Yoga: Drayton Village Hall, Lockway, Drayton. 11am. £5. 07766 991487.

Slimming World: Abingdon Rugby Club, Lambrick Way, Abingdon. 7.30pm. £10 membership and £4.95 each week after. 07508 202642.

TUESDAY

New Abingdon Slimming World Group: Abingdon Cricket Club, Hales Meadows, Culham Road, Abingdon. 7.30pm. 07739 179872.

2121 (Abingdon) Sqn Air Training Corps: 2121 (Abingdon) Sqn premises, Wootton Road, Whitecross, Abingdon. A youth organisation with adventure training, sports, gliding and flying. The Sqn meets twice a week. 7.15pm. £8. 01235 538955.

Family Fun – Meadow Mysteries: Environmental Education Centre, Sutton Courtenay Road, Sutton Courtenay. Discover the array of mini-beasts and other creatures that live in the meadow. Join us for sweep netting and craft activities. Activities are aimed at children aged five to 11. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Sorry no dogs allowed. 10am. £4 per child, accompanying adults free. 01235 862024.

Friendly Bridge Game: Yarnton Village Hall The Paddocks, Yarnton. Central Yarnton Bridge Club. 9.50am. £3 each session. 07766 621710.

Slimming World: Abingdon Cricket Club, Culham Road, Abingdon. 5.30pm and 7.30pm. 07739179872.

Slimming World: Didcot Civic Hall, Britwell Road, Didcot. 9.30am, 11.30am, 5pm and 7pm. £10 membership and then £4.95 a week. 07788 132541.

Summer Fun: Vale & Downland Museum, 19 Church Street, Wantage. Different themed activities every Tuesday. Drop in 11am-3pm. Free but donations welcome. 01235 771447.

Tea Dance: Woodstock Social Club, 44 Oxford Street, Woodstock. 2pm. £2. 01993 812094.

WEDNESDAY

Drop-in family event – Junk Model Jeeps: Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, Harrisons Lane, Woodstock. Make your own vehicle, inspired by the Queen's service as a mechanic in the Second World War. 2pm. Free for kids with a paying adult. 01993 811214.

National Gardens Scheme: The Old Bakehouse, South Newington. Newly opening this year. Half-acre garden described as a 'hidden gem' in the grounds of a C17 Horton ironstone house (not open). Giant pines and mature trees provide a backdrop to the garden. Wheelchair access. Dogs on leads. Plant sale. 1pm. Adult £3, children free.

Witney Bytomic Taekwondo Classes: Wood Green School, Woodstock Road, Witney. 7pm. Monthly fees apply. 01844 281888.

To get an event of any kind listed here, enter the details into our easy-to-use online database at thisisoxfordshire.co.uk/events

Please add your event no later than ten days before the day of publication.

Music

THURSDAY

The Cock Inn, Combe: Nick Gill Oxford. Classic jazz and ragtime piano/vocals. 8-11pm. Free.

The Bullingdon, 162 Cowley Road, Oxford: Matt Edwards. The Haven Club. Blues. 8pm. £8, £5 (NUS).

O2 Academy Oxford, 190 Cowley Road, Oxford: Big D & the Kids Table. Ska-punk. 7pm. £12.

O2 Academy Oxford, 190 Cowley Road, Oxford: Beres Hammond. One of Jamaica's greatest singer songwriters. 10pm. £35.

Joe's Bar & Grill, 260 Banbury Road, Summertown: Nick Breakspear. Solo show from Black Hats frontman. 8pm. Free.

The Library Pub, 182 Cowley Road, Oxford: The Folk Collective featuring Tio Rex, We Bless This Mess, Screaming Culture. Folk-punk. 7pm.

FRIDAY

Exeter College Chapel, Turl Street, Oxford: Baroque Music by Candlelight – Le Roi Danse. Performed by Charivari Agréable. £17, £15 (seniors), £10 (students). 8pm. 01865 305305.

The Bullingdon, 162 Cowley Road, Oxford: Infurious, The Reaper, Social Discharge, Raised By Hypocrites. Hard rock and heavy metal. 6.30pm. £6.

O2 Academy Oxford, 190 Cowley Road, Oxford: Hell's Gazelles, 1000 Chains, Twisted State Of Mind, Hope Burden, Repercussions of Yesterday. Hard rock and heavy metal. 7pm.

The Wheatsheaf, 129 High Street, Oxford: Force Of Mortality, Man Make Fire, Ways Across. Hard rock and heavy metal. 7.45pm. £6.

East Oxford Community Centre, 44b Princes Street, Oxford: Martha, Rainbow Reservoir, Lucy Leave. Punk-pop. 7.30pm. £6.

SATURDAY

Old Mill Hall, Grove: White Horse Festival Ceilidh with Threepenny Bit and caller Andy Rouse with half-time spot from Three Sheets to the Wind. 8-11.30pm. £9 adults, £4.50 u16s.

The Bullingdon, 162 Cowley Road, Oxford: LaVendore Rogue. The Haven Club. Blues. 7pm. £8, £5 (NUS).

Royal Standard, 78 London Road, Headington: Sub Zero. Popular covers duo. 8.30pm. Free.

O2 Academy Oxford, 190 Cowley Road, Oxford: Better Than Never, Fault Line, Elasea, Cherokee. Punk-pop & alt-rock. 7pm. £8.

The White House, 38 Abingdon Road, Oxford: Pete Fryer Band & Special Guests 50th Anniversary Special. Blues-rock. 8pm. Free.

SUNDAY

Oxford Wine Café, 38 South Parade, Summertown: Hugh Turner's 'Colours' Quartet. Sax, guitar, bass and drums. 6.30-9pm. Free.

Exeter College Chapel, Turl Street, Oxford: Baroque Music by Candlelight – In Guilty Night. 17th-century sacred songs, psalms, motets, and anthems. Performed by Charivari Agréable. £18, £16 (seniors), £10 (students). 8pm. 01865 305305.

Holywell Music Room, Holywell Street, Oxford: Jack Gibbons plays Chopin. Polonaises & Fantaisies. In advance £16 (on door £20). 8pm. 01865 305305.

The Wheatsheaf, 129 High Street, Oxford: Superloose, Mark Sollis, Firegazers, Mark Atherton, Anneli Lähdetär. Acoustic selection from the Klub Kak crew. 3pm. Downstairs bar. Free.

MONDAY

James Street Tavern, 47-48 James Street, Oxford: Scandi-Sesh. Monthly Scandinavian music night. 8.30pm. Free.

TUESDAY

Exeter College Chapel, Turl Street, Oxford: Tudor Music by Candlelight – My Ladye Loves. Performed by Charivari Agreable. £17, £15 (seniors), £10 (students). 8pm. 01865 305305.

The Bullingdon, 162 Cowley Road, Oxford: Martin Pickett Organisation. Popular pianist plays organ. Jazz at the Bully. 8.30pm. Free.

O2 Academy Oxford, 190 Cowley Road, Oxford: Hayseed Dixie. Appalachian rockgrass hellraisers on tour. 7.30pm. £15.

Fopp, 96-97 Gloucester Green, Oxford: George Montague Album Signing. Singer-songwriter, beatboxer and live-looper George Montague will sign copies of his debut album. 5.30pm. Free.

WEDNESDAY

All Saints' Church, Lime Walk, Oxford: All Saints' Summer Festival Of Music & The Arts 2016. Sheridan Edward, tenor, and Freya Jacklin, mezzo-soprano. Free admission. 8pm. 07941 724326.

Exeter College Chapel, Turl Street, Oxford: Baroque Music by Candlelight – A Musical Offering. Performed by Charivari Agréable. £17, £15 (seniors), £10 (students). 8pm. 01865 305305.

Holywell Music Room, Holywell Street, Oxford: Jack Gibbons' Farewell Piano Party. In advance £16 (on door £20). 8pm. 01865 305305.

Theatre

OXFORD

Glee Club, Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford: Aug 13, Ian Stone and Leroy Brito. 7.15pm. £14.50. 0871 472 04007.

Oxford Castle, New Road, Oxford: Until Aug 13, *Macbeth* & *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. BMH present an hour-long version of Shakespeare's tragedy and comedy. 7pm. £15, £13 concs. 01865 260666.

Old Fire Station, 40 George Street, Oxford: Aug 12, *The Unhallowed Master.* Implexa Dance present an unrelenting tale of oppression, told entirely through contemporary dance. 7.30pm. £12, £10. 01865 305305.

Oxford Playhouse, Beaumont Street, Oxford: Aug 12-13, *Peter Pan in Scarlet.* This world premiere adaptation of the official sequel to J.M. Barrie's Peter Pan. 7.30pm. £11.50-£24. 01865 305305.

Oxford University Parks, Parks Road, Oxford: Until Aug 13, *Hamlet.* Creation Theatre. 7.30pm. £22 to £27. 01865 766266.

The Gardens of Wadham College, Parks Road, Oxford: Until Aug 18, *Love's Labour's Lost.* 7.30pm. £18-£23 (Previews June 28-30 £13). 0844 879 4418.

Cornerstone Arts Centre, 25 Station Road, Didcot: Aug 13-14, *High School Musical* (family and children's theatre for ages eight to 19). 2pm. Saturday 2.30pm and 7.30pm, Sunday 2pm. £10. 01235 515144.

Chipping Norton Theatre, Spring Street, Chipping Norton: Aug 16, Josh Widdicombe. 7.45pm. £19.50. 01608 642350.

CakeSport

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Johnson the hero

Puritans get off to perfect start

RICKY Johnson scored the only goal of the game as Banbury United marked their return to the Evo-Stik Southern League Premier Division with victory at Basingstoke Town.

Johnson fired home on the hour to give Mike Ford's newly-promoted side the best possible start to the season.

Banbury had the better of the first half, with Johnson shooting into the side-netting and having an effort disallowed for offside.

Basingstoke enjoyed a good spell just before half-time when centre half Matt Partridge fired just over.

Mark Janes stung the hands of Town keeper Alex Tokarczyk before Banbury scored the only goal of the game in the 63rd minute.

Zac McEachran fed the ball through to Johnson, who fired home from 12 yards.

The visitors stayed in control and would have won by more had efforts from McEachran and Duran Martin not struck the bar

After the game it was announced Banbury defender Charlie Wise, who played all last season, had left the club.

Banbury Utd: Harding, White, Lynn, Nash, Westbrook, Gunn, McEachran, Self (Martin 82), Johnson, Janes. (Barcelos 68), Bell (Browne 68). Subs not used: Benjamin, Howards.

Attendance: 482.



Ricky Johnson scored the only goal as Banbury United beat Basingstoke Town

Banbury dig deep to stay in title hunt

BANBURY recovered from a poor start to give themselves an outside chance of the Division 1 title with a dramatic 23-run victory at Tring Park.

Choosing to bat first in the Home Counties Premier League clash, Banbury slipped to 44-4, but were rescued by a fifth-wicket stand of 112 between Lloyd Sabin (70) and Richard West (93).

They eventually made 218, Doug Pratt taking 5-85.

At 184-5, following half-centuries from Ben Abbott (60) and Curran Gaur (53), Tring were in control.

But the last five wickets fell for 11 runs to Luke Ryan (4-72) and West to give the visitors an unlikely win.

BANBURY

H Darby c Pritchard b Pratt 5
O Clarke c Pritchard b Pratt 2
C Haupt c Gaur b Stanway 1
L Sabin c Stanway b Payne 70
J Lambden c Pritchard b Gumbs 12
R West c Gaur b Pratt 93
A Blanchard c Pritchard b Payne 3
L Ryan b Payne 0
K Penhale b Pratt 10
T Bradbeer c Pritchard b Pratt 12
O Wright not out 4
Extras 6
Total (all out, 63.5 ovs) 218

Fall: 1-5, 2-6, 3-12, 4-44, 5-156, 6-161, 7-161, 8-190, 9-202.

Bowling: Stanway 18-10-25-1, Pratt 19.5-2-85-5, Gumbs 11-1-38-1, Payne 12-2-52-3, MacDonell 3-0-15-0.

TRING PARK

A Partner c Wright b Penhale 2
B Abbott c Darby b Blanchard 60
C MacDonell lbw Ryan 8
M Payne lbw Blanchard 27
S Gumbs lbw West 24
C Gaur b Clarke 53
R Pritchard st Bradbeer b Ryan 8
T Wastling c West b Ryan 7
S Stanway c Darby b West 1
J Seagrave not out 0
D Pratt c Sabin b Ryan 0
Extras 5
Total (all out, 51 ovs) 195

Fall: 1-10, 2-49, 3-95, 4-115, 5-135, 6-184, 7-192, 8-195, 9-195.

Bowling: Penhale 4-1-25-1, Ryan 21-4-72-4, Wright 4-0-19-0, West 8-1-25-2, Blanchard 8-1-31-2, Clarke 6-0-19-1.

Tring Park 7pts, Banbury 25

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ARIES Mar 21-Apr 19

Stop for a moment and reflect. You've prepared mentally, now all you have to do is take next steps toward your dreams. You're closer than you think my friend and phone calls you receive this week will be firm proof of this. Time spent on paperwork and contracts helps you close a deal and a chapter which takes you to a better place in life. Ring now for a full update.

0906 585 4360

TAURUS Apr 20-May 20

You have been let down by a close one too many times now and, if you don't put some boundary lines in place, you are only going to end up feeling angry with yourself by the time Friday comes around. Use Tuesday and Friday as power days to break bad habits and start new regimes. Success is yours if you do my friend. Ring now to hear whose company you're better without.

0906 585 4361

GEMINI May 21-Jun 20

We know how important your close ones are to you. Your loyalty has been known to go above and beyond the call of duty. Careful of saying things you don't mean just to build up their confidence, or you could end up with a commitment you cannot get out of and which you won't enjoy. Ring my starline right now to hear how Capricorns pour magic into your working week.

0906 585 4362

CANCER Jun 21-Jul 22

The things you have been fearing and worrying about are actually the very things you can afford to be confident in. More people than you think have your back, so don't be afraid of grabbing the bull by the horns and telling all concerned how you would deal with all that's occurring. New names stir your imagination and heart. Ring me to hear why I'm so excited for you this August.

0906 585 4363

LEO Jul 23-Aug 22

Bad news you received will actually turn out to be good news by the time this week is over. The chance to get away and visit someone you have not seen for a long time should turn out to be just the tonic you have needed to feel in control of your life again. Long distance travel offered for work opens up a whole new chapter in your career. Ring now to hear about tomorrow today.

0906 585 4364

VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

The younger generation come to mind. You try to work out how best to help them make their lives more manageable. Speak from the heart, as you and I know what needs to be said. It is no longer a time to hold back as you've been dancing around certain subjects for too long now. Ring to hear how Pluto blesses fresh starts.

0906 585 4365

LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

Your recent actions have been the cause of much speculation and you may be finding it hard not to be over-emotional after all that's occurred. Careful of blaming the wrong people for things that went wrong earlier in the month or you could end up losing a relationship which has only just begun to get back on track. Ring now to hear how Mars promises exciting new work opportunities.

0906 585 4366

SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

Others may have tried to break you, but they failed didn't they Scorpio? You and know you're stronger than others think and it takes a lot for you to back down from your dreams. In fact, actions you make and decisions you come to this month put you on a better professional path than you've been on in years. Ring now to hear why family may be acting secretively.

0906 585 4367

SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

Admitting how you really feel to loved ones is hard after all the hurt you've been through in recent years. You've got to try to wear your heart on your sleeve though Sagittarius, or you will risk losing the powerful connection you've built up. A legal link can go in your favour if you make the time to better prepare yourself. Ring now to hear how exciting your love life can be this year.

0906 585 4368

CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

I can see how much recent dramas have affected you, but to keep your feelings bottled up in the way you have is only going to lead to more pain and frustration. Your ruling planet Saturn offers you the words you need to get a close one back on side. All you need to do is find the nerve to say them out loud. Education links formed now are lucky. Ring me so I can make your life spectacular.

0906 585 4369

AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

A link with education comes back around. Keep your eyes and ears open, as this week really can see you coming full circle my friend. An argument in the family is getting out of hand. Careful whose side you take, as not everyone is sticking to the facts. A reckless mood on Friday actually works in your favour, as you're about to discover. Ring now to better understand your emotions.

0906 585 4370

PISCES Feb 19-Mar 20

You know what they say Pisces, if at first you don't succeed... I know you can find the energy to try once more, and so do you if you're honest with yourself. Feeling sorry for yourself never was your forte, so grab life with both hands and you'll soon realise that your dreams are well within your reach. Ring now to hear why it's worth sticking to the weekend plans you made.

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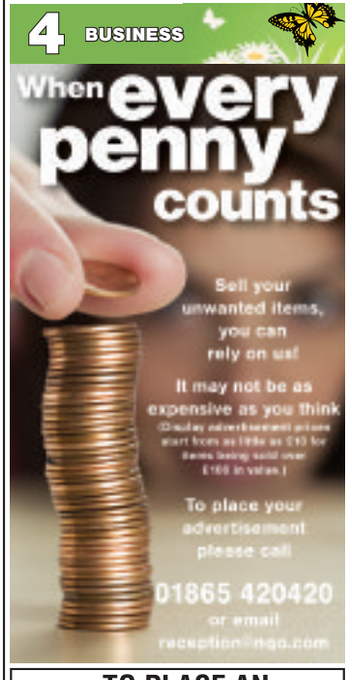
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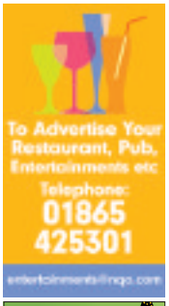
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Announcements - Public Notices

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Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the above named, late of 2 Highfield Court, Brackley, Northamptonshire, NN13 7AG, who died on 21/04/2016, are required to send written particulars thereof to the undersigned on or before 19/10/2016, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had notice.

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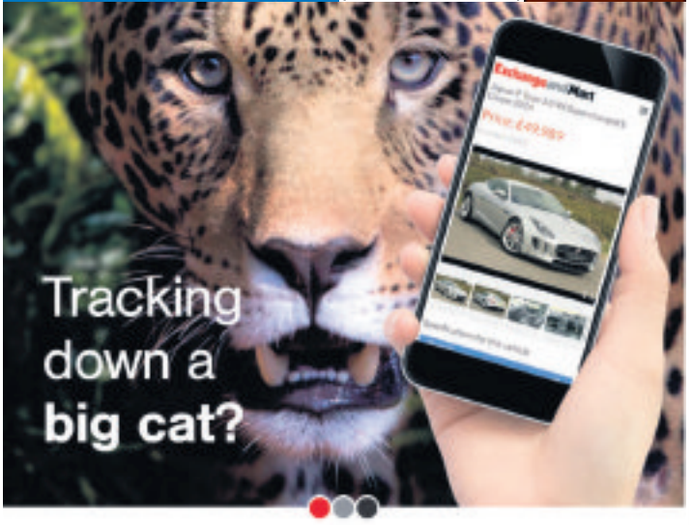
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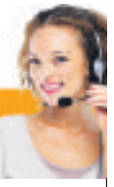
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Orders for insertion of advertisements in NEWSQUEST (OXFORDSHIRE & WILTSHIRE) LTD titles are accepted subject to the following conditions:

1. By placing the order the Advertiser warrants that the advertisement is legal, decent, honest and truthful complying with the British Codes of Advertising and Sales Promotion, with any relevant codes of practice and with all requirements of current legislation and that it contains nothing that is defamatory or that constitutes an infringement of the proprietary or other rights of any third party.
2. The Advertiser agrees to indemnify the Publisher in respect of all costs, damages or other charges falling upon the newspaper as the result of legal actions or threatened legal actions arising from the publication of the advertisement.
3. While every endeavour will be made to meet the wishes of the Advertiser, the Publisher does not guarantee the insertion of any particular advertisement either on any specified date or dates or at all.
4. All advertisements must be accompanied by the name and address of the Advertiser for record purposes and the Publisher may require evidence to establish the Advertiser's bona fides and to substantiate any claims made in the advertisement.
5. (i) In the event of any error, misprint or omission in the printing of an advertisement or part of an advertisement the Publisher will at the Publisher's election either re-insert the advertisement or part of an advertisement as the case may be or make a reasonable refund or adjustment to the cost. No re-insertion, refund or adjustment will be made where the error, misprint or omission does not materially detract from the advertisement.
(ii) In no circumstances shall the total liability of the Publisher for any error, misprint or omission exceed (a) the amount of a full refund of any price paid to the Publisher for the advertisement in connection with which liability arose or (b) the cost of a further or corrective advertisement of a type and standard reasonably comparable to that in connection with which liability arose.
(iii) The Advertiser agrees to check the published advertisement for any errors or omissions and to notify the Publisher thereof by 9.30 the following morning, if correction and republication is required. If no notice is received by 9.30 the following morning, the Advertiser is deemed to have accepted the advertisement in its entirety and will pay the full charge.
(iv) The Publisher shall not be liable for any loss or damage occasioned by any total or partial failure (however caused) of publication or distribution of any newspaper or edition in which any advertisement is scheduled to appear.
6. **THE PUBLISHER RESERVES THE RIGHT TO:**
(i) Cancel the order at any time by giving reasonable notice before the next insertion, but in that event the Advertiser shall not be liable for payment of the difference (if any) between the rates for the series specified in the order and the usual price for the series of insertions which has appeared when the order is stopped;
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7. Queries over classified advertisements which have been cancelled must be accompanied by the stop number given at the time of cancellation.
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Oxford Mail, Witney Gazette, Bicester Advertiser, Herald Series, Oxford Star, Oxford Times and Banbury Cake.
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14. (i) The copyright for all purposes in all artwork, copy and other material which the Publisher or its employees have originated, contributed to or reworked shall vest in the Publisher.
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15. The placing of an order by an Advertiser constitutes an assurance that all necessary authority and permission has been secured in respect of the use in the advertisement(s) of pictorial representations of (or purporting to be of) living persons, and of references to the words attributed to living persons.
16. Advertisement orders issued by an advertising agency as a principal must be on the agency's official form. When copy instructions not constituting an official order are issued, they shall be clearly marked 'Copy instructions - not an order'.
17. Users of the computerised artwork delivery system, via ISDN, must before transmission obtain a unique reference number from the Publisher in order that their artwork can be identified upon receipt. The Publisher will not be responsible for errors occasioned by the subsequent receipt of artwork without any such identification.
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No advertisement which indicates or can reasonably be understood as indicating an intention to discriminate on the grounds of sex (e.g. by inviting invitations from only male or only females) may be accepted unless exempted from the requirements of the Sex Discrimination Act. A statement must be made at the time the advertisement is placed, saying which of the exceptions in the Act is considered to apply.
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The Publisher reserves the right not to accept recruitment advertisements which request a photograph or hints of discrimination on racial grounds in support of an application.
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All advertisements will be accepted only on the express condition that the Advertiser warrants that the advertisement does not in any way contravene the provisions of the Trade Descriptions Act 1968.
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23. All orders from Advertising Agencies are governed by the standard conditions agreed between the Newspaper Society and the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising. The Director's personal guarantee given to the Newspaper Society at the time of recognition is deemed to be part of these conditions of acceptance.
24. All gross advertising rates (except Classified Lineage) are subject to a 0.1 per cent Advertising Standards Board of Finance surcharge, payable by Advertisers to help finance the self regulatory control system administered by the Advertising Standards Authority.
25. If an Advertiser in receipt of series or volume discount cancels before fulfilling the terms for the discount, the Publisher reserves the right to make a surcharge up to the full published rates for the type of advertisement.
26. The placing of an order for the insertion of an advertisement shall amount to an acceptance of the above conditions and any conditions stipulated on an Advertiser's order form or elsewhere shall be void insofar as they are in conflict with them.

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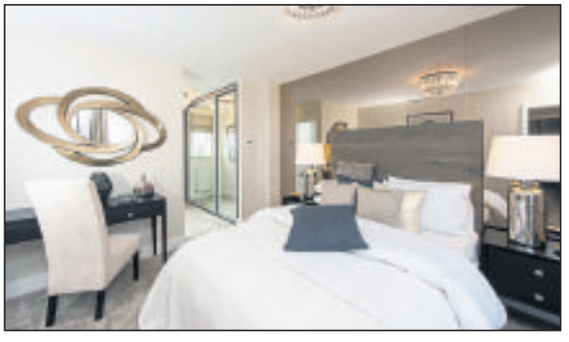
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Linden Homes at Hawkswood at Kingsmere in Bicester with the kitchen/dining room and bedroom

Land shortage is blamed for house building crisis

ONE in three people blame housing shortages on a lack of available land to build on, new research shows.

The findings came from a survey of 2,000 people commissioned by house builder Linden Homes, which is behind the Hawkswood development in north Oxfordshire.

Almost a quarter of those questioned also blamed delays in the planning system

Gill Oliver
gill.oliver@nqo.com

But although so many respondents said the property shortage was due to a 'lack of building land', less than half said they'd be willing to have new homes built in their home town, village or city.

Shelley West, of Linden Homes Thames Valley, said: "The housing shortage is an issue that is very real for us and as a leading housebuilder we want to ensure that we are helping plug that gap in delivering much needed new homes.

"Proposals are often rejected based on the community's perception, so it's interesting to see the kick-back from those surveyed regarding building in their own backyard.

She added: "With less than half of the people willing to see that happen – that does highlight a challenge we are faced with as an industry."

Despite schemes such as the government-backed Help to Buy, the vast majority of those asked believed it is still too hard for young people to get on to the property ladder.

Ms West added: "Schemes likes Help to Buy have been brought in to help people in Oxfordshire get on or up the ladder and are there for the taking."

Hawkswood is part of the new Kingsmere complex in Bicester.

Other Linden Homes developments around the county include Victory Fields near Burford, Beaumont Gardens at Sutton Courtenay and The Pitchings at Steventon.

For more information visit lindenhomes.co.uk

Contact property writer Gill Oliver with your stories on 01865 425475 or email propertyedit@nqo.com

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Thomas James

Shed heaven- six of the best

Get inspired to do up your shed with these amazing examples, all featured on this year's Shed of Year.





Rotating Shed owned by Bryan Lewis Jones in Denbighshire

As the name suggest, the stunning, open plan, curved architectural design rotates through 360 degrees to follow the sunlight throughout the day. Featuring inviting lounge chairs and a sumptuous fireplace, the shed is a great retreat.



Art studio, owned by Peter Sedo in Worcestershire

The quirky design consisting of recycled wood, a juxtaposition of curved and angled lines and various different shaped windows, this shed is bathed in natural light. Set on a vast property, the shed is used as a work space and a place to relax and entertain.



Maggie Ewing, owned by David Carter in the Scottish Highlands

This shed is a renovated ex-boat wheelhouse, originally called the Boy Peter, which was one of the last boats ever to be commercially built in the county of Caithness. The boat is located right at the edge of the North Sea and faces directly out to sea.





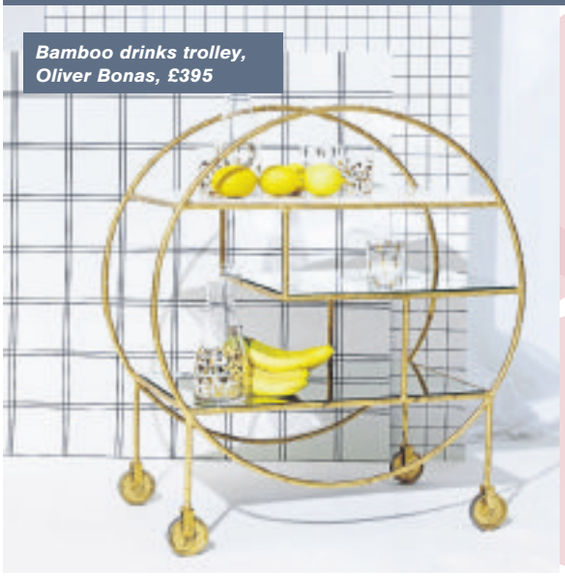
West Wing, owned by Kevin Herbert in Berkshire

Made from 90 per cent recycled materials across three sections, the West Wing includes a bed in loft space, an area to relax and escape, a secret bookcase, a play area, storage and workshop.



Inpired by nature

After the explosion of the tropics, plants and animal prints seen in home design and fashion, it seems like an understandable progression to move towards more pared down nature-inspired furnishings. This aesthetic has something about it the eye naturally recognises; a jug reminiscent of a lagoon, a candle holder that looks like a plant, for example, all in natural-looking materials and colours. These pickings are muted and classically chic. Plus your home will have such an outdoors feel you'll never need to leave...



Bamboo drinks trolley, Oliver Bonas, £395



Woven wood lantern, HomeSense, £19.99



Daisy patterned plate, HomeSense £5.99



Green cushion, HomeSense, £12.99

Marble pestle and mortar, Debenhams, £30



Lamp, Debenhams, £80



Lagoon inspired blue jug, HomeSense,



Palm tree candle holder, Debenhams, £25

The why & how of getting a bespoke kitchen

Why go bespoke?

WHEN the word "bespoke" is used to describe a kitchen, it refers to one that's been designed for and by you and handmade from scratch, maximising the space available. A truly bespoke kitchen will make the most of the architectural space available.

Added to that, you can also have whatever specifications you want (can afford) – a bespoke kitchen is built around you rather than you having to adapt your ideas to an off-the-shelf solution which is a generic, "one size fits all" approach where compromises invariably have to be made.

A key benefit of a kitchen designed around you is that you can specify any non-standard dimension or detail you desire. Say if you have sloping ceilings, you can ask for bespoke storage to fit the non-standard space.

There's a huge range of finishes, materials, colours, fittings and styles to choose from, therefore you want a company with a proven reputation.

Get a personal recommendation

NOTHING is better than hearing about the company through word of mouth. Ask family and friends for their experiences and speak to companies who provide a bespoke service in your area. You'll want to know whether they stick to schedule and how well they are able to turn the customer's visions into reality.

...or research the company well

IF you can't get a recommendation choose an established company with a reputation for hand-crafted joinery – the foundation of your new kitchen – and one that is prepared to listen. Ask the kitchen company if you can view some of their previous projects; they are usually more than happy to arrange this.

Use the opportunity not only to look at the quality of the fitting, but to quiz the homeowner. How well does the company respond to problems and what is their aftercare service like? Do the kitchen fitters make much mess and do they provide a skip?

Prepare before your first meeting

BEFORE your first meeting with a designer, go online to help you pinpoint the style you want. Start building a mood board using a website such as Pinterest and soon you'll see certain recurring themes.

These will be the foundation for your new kitchen. Take your wish-list of appliances and any inspirations you have.

You may not know exactly what you want, but it is a great starting point for discussion. If you have a floor-plan of the room then that will be helpful too.

A good designer will be able to interpret your mood board and establish what is important to you. Ask for a meeting at your home so the designer can get to know your style and better understand the brief.



kitchen confidential

- Choose the granite colour before the paint colour, it's a much easier way around in the long run.
- Take samples home to look at them in the light of the room. try to hold them the way they will really be, so the granite would be horizontal and the unit sample colour board be vertical, try to have your flooring sample on site at the same time if possible.
- The cost: A bespoke kitchen can start at anything from around £18,000 to £35,000 – and can obviously go up dramatically, into the hundreds of thousands, if you have a long list of very specific requirements and expensive finishes.

Have a clear budget in mind at the outset. You can be frank and upfront about it.



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1b Crouch Street

Martin & Co are pleased to present a new to the market one bedroom studio apartment situated conveniently for the town centre and train station. The property comprises an open plan kitchen and living area. There is also a separate bathroom with shower. The property is available unfurnished and would suit ideally a single professional. EPC rating: C

525



2 Kings Road

Martin & Co are pleased to present this two bedroom cottage situated in the village of Bloxham. The property benefits from one double bedroom and a second smaller bedroom / office. The bathroom contains a WC and a shower. Good size kitchen and living room. Washing machine and fridge available. EPC rating C

800



Broughton Road

Martin & Co are pleased to present a new to the market one bedroom room with ensuite shower in a shared house conveniently situated within walking distance to the town centre and train station. The room benefits from a kitchenette area also. The room is fully furnished and all bills are inclusive. Ideal for a single professional.

495



46 Centre Street

Martin & Co are pleased to present a spacious four bedroom mid terraced property situated in Grimsbury within walking distance to the town centre and train station. The property comprises two reception rooms; kitchen; upstairs there are four bedrooms on 2 split levels. The master bedroom benefits from an ensuite bathroom. EPC Rating: D.

925

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Used Car Road Test



by Jonathan Crouch

Renault Megane makes sense







Introduction

By 2014, Renault's third generation Megane was getting a little old, having been old sale since 2008. However, it still had two years to live, so the French brand gave the car one last update to last it through the final couple of years of its life in MK3 model guise. In this final form, this Gallic family hatchback was a smarter proposition - in more ways than one. If you're shopping for something Focus or Astra-shaped in the used car family hatchback segment, it probably won't be one of the first cars you'll immediately think of but it still offers a very complete all-round package that's difficult to ignore.

The History

When the final version of the third generation Renault Megane reached the company's dealer showrooms early in 2014, it was in a period of turmoil for the French maker. The brand had gambled on a range of full-electric models and that outlay was taking a long while to pay off. Worse, the expenditure had forced the Gallic brand to compromise its development budget a little, hence the fact that the third generation Megane, first introduced in 2008, had still to represent the company in Europe's most important family hatchback buying segment.

This model had already been heavily revised once, in 2012 when it got fresh engine choices and a range of styling tweaks. In this later version, the looks were further tweaked and specifications enhanced. The changes lasted the MK3 model through to the end of its life at the end of 2015.

What To Look For

The Mégane's powerplants have a good reliability record but customer satisfaction surveys show the Renault still has some way to go to approach the class best when it comes to reliability of electronics and servicing costs. The cabins look great when new but after surveying a few used examples, some of the dash materials can look a little scratched quite easily. As a result, it'll help if you make sure the car you're looking at is in perfect condition. Check for crash damage, make sure kids haven't damaged the rear upholstery or seat backs and ensure that sunroofs, central locking and alarms all work.

On The Road

Detailed tweaks made to this MK3 model Megane in its later years included a revised front suspension/subframe arrangement to improve directional precision and a rear suspension set-up tuned to produce a more responsive, agile ride, as well as offer improved cornering. Sportier-trimmed variants, like the GT Line version, claimed to take that a little further by using the same slightly stiffer set-up used in the three-door Megane Coupe. But none of it gives this car the Renaultsport feeling. Nor should it. Most buyers in this segment don't want to drive on their door handles.

The petrol unit of choice, the 1.2-litre TCe, was available in two guises, the existing 115bhp manual model joined by a pokier 130bhp variant that was only offered with the brand's twin clutch EDC automatic gearbox. The 1.2 TCe was the first Renault petrol powerplant to use direct fuel injection and turbocharging to gain fuel-efficient performance. This was yet another example of engine down-sizing in this segment, following the success of Ford's 1.0-litre Focus EcoBoost models.

Ultimately though, for diesel-like pulling power, you really need a diesel and the vast majority of MK3 model Megane customers tended to opt for this car in 1.5-litre form. The 1.5-litre dCi 110 unit was Renault's best-selling global engine in this period and post-2014 model Megane customers who selected it could choose between two versions: a manual model with Stop & Start or an automatic EDC variant. Either way, a 20% increase in pulling power meant that there was at least 260Nm of torque on offer, enough to get you to 62mph in around 12s on the way to 118mph. Should that not be sufficient in your five-door Megane Hatch or Sport Tourer estate, then one other key diesel choice remains – the impressive 1.6 dCi 130 unit. This was one of the best diesels of the period and was a good choice for towers, with a useful 320Nm of torque meaning a sub-10s rest to sixty time on the way to 124mph.

Overall

Renault's third generation Megane is good value on the used car market – which could well mean that your budget might well stretch to one of the last post-2014 model variants we've been looking at here. If so, you'll get yourself a well equipped comfort-orientated family hatch that offers a lot of car for the money. It really is a very credible alternative to the usual Astra and Focus-class choices in the family hatchback segment. In the lower reaches of the range, driving comfort takes priority over driving dynamics, but that's probably as it should be. Further up the line-up though, you can really feel a touch of Renaultsport magic in the way this car attacks a twisting road.

Overall, this car is roomy, quiet, safe and pleasantly plush, even in entry-level form. In other words, a compact family five-door that ticks an awful lot of boxes. And one an awful lot of people we think, would rather enjoy owning….

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Motors - first for new cars

New Car Launch Model Of The Week



by Jonathan Crouch

Ford's EcoSport is Eco friendly







THE Ecosport, Ford's smallest crossover model, has been improved with the addition of a pokier 140PS EcoBoost petrol engine at the top of the range. Jonathan Crouch reports

Ten Second Review

The Ford EcoSport uses tried and tested Fiesta mechanicals to offer buyers a front-wheel drive car with added ride height and chunky good looks. Now it's got a pokier 1.0 EcoBoost 140PS petrol engine at the top of the range, while more recent versions also boast a smarter interior, cleaner engines and more equipment. It all sounds quite promising.

Background

Ford didn't rush into bringing us a supermini-based Crossover model. Indeed, the market was awash with the things by the time the brand brought us its own take in this genre, the Fiesta-based EcoSport, in the Spring of 2014. Even so, there were signs that all was not quite right with the product planning. Early buyers questioned the car's refinement, its driving dynamics, its interior and the need to drive around with a huge great spare wheel hanging off the back of the tailgate. Fortunately though, Ford was listening.

So, the brand has been continually moving to rejuvenate the car. Tweaks to the suspension have improved the ride plus there's greater refinement, a smarter cabin and the option to do without the rear-mounted spare wheel. More recently, a pokier 140PS 1.0-litre EcoBoost petrol engine has been added in at the top of the ange. Otherwise though, this car is much as before, with chunky looks that offer up a bit of Amazonian attitude, even if in truth, this car is more CBeebies than SAS in its take on hostile streetlife. Let's check it out.

Driving Experience

The EcoSport now gets a choice of four engines, three petrol units and one diesel. The 1.5-litre diesel now boasts 95PS, 22PS less than before. Most EcoSport buyers though, will continue to choose a petrol option, possibly the old 112PS 1.5 Ti-VCT unit but more probably Ford's innovative 125PS 1.0-litre EcoBoost engine. It makes 0-62mph in 12.7s on the way to 112mph. If you want more performance, there's also now a 140PS version of this unit in the top Titanium S derivative.

On the road dynamics have improved since the original launch thanks to suspension retuning with revised rear twist beam suspension and more carefully considered spring and damper rates for chassis optimisation, plus a 10mm reduction in ride height and optimised Electronic Stability Control and power steering systems. Crossovers of this kind need to drive as much like the superminis they're based on as possible. From here on, the signs are that this one will.

As before, there's no 4x4 option, but you do get a great raised driving position and a comprehensive package of driver assistance technologies, including Electronic Stability Program and Hill Launch Assist.

Design and Build

The key visual change made to this car since its original launch is that you no longer have to have a huge great spare wheel pinned to the back window - though that option's still available if you want it. It means that the car's existing attributes come over with a more contemporary air.

Inside, there's a restyled instrument cluster with a chrome surround, a light dimming function, plus there are chrome tips for the window switches and the handbrake lever's easier to get at. Small changes to be sure, but they promise to give the cabin more of a quality feel.

Market and Model

There are three trim levels - 'Zetec', 'Titanium' and 'Titanium S'. Expect to pay from around £14,600 for entry-level petrol versions of this car, with a £1,500 premium if you want the Powershift automatic. The 1.5-litre diesel variant starts from just over £16,000. You can also talk to your dealership about a sportier-looking 'S' variant that gets the pokier 1.0 EcoBoost 140PS petrol engine, along with features like a black roof, mirror caps, 17-inch alloy wheels, a rear diffuser and privacy glass. There's are partial leather seats on Titanium models and options include sat nav technology and a rear view camera.

Cost of Ownership

Economy and emissions aren't too far off the vehicle this car is based upon, the Fiesta. There's been some small controversy around the 1.0-litre EcoBoost engine not making anything like its claimed fuel economy figures in real world conditions, but that can be said of many small capacity turbocharged petrol engines. It's just a quirk of the NEDC fuel testing program. This 125PS variant claims to manage 52.3mpg on the combined cycle and 125g/km of CO_2, while for the 140PS model, the figures are 52.3mpg and 125g/km. The base 1.5 Ti-VCT engine delivers 44.8mpg and 149g/km. Finally, there's the 1.5 TDCi diesel which manages 64.2mpg and 115g/km.

Summary

In this guise, the Ford EcoSport looks a more promising prospect. It's more of a crossover and less of a small SUV - which is what buyers seem to want. And, as before, its practical and decently equipped. Ride and refinement are now very good by class standards too - and the SYNC connectivity AppLink system is just brilliant.

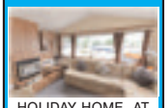
All these reasons will combine with the small Crossover segment's current popularity to ensure that Ford will probably sell as many of these as they can import. My daughter, for example, would love one. It is, as ever, a case of giving the market what it wants.

Facts at a glance

CAR: Ford EcoSport
PRICES: £14,645 - £17,595
INSURANCE GROUPS: 9E-11E
CO2 EMISSIONS: 115-149g/km
PERFORMANCE: [1.0 EcoBoost 125PS] 0-62mph 12.7s / top speed 112mph
FUEL CONSUMPTION: [1.0 EcoBoost 125PS] (combined) 53.3mpg
STANDARD SAFETY FEATURES: Six airbags, stability control, hill start assist, ABS brakes
WILL IT FIT IN YOUR GARAGE?: Length/Width/Height 4017/1765/1660mm

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* Source: Continental Research 2008; 41% respondents stated they used local media as a source of information when looking to buy a car from a private seller. Local media = newspaper websites and supplements.



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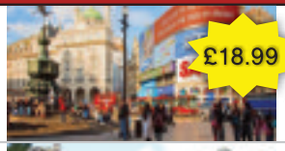


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Friday 9th September 2016

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Hotel: The Royal Bath Hotel, Bournemouth The Royal Bath has a superb location directly on the front looking down upon miles of golden sands. Bournemouth is full of flowers, beautiful parks and gardens. It is probably Britain's most international resort. Excursions: New Forest & Christchurch
Monday 12th September 2016

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4 ★ DELUXE PEAK DISTRICT

Hotel: Shrigley Hall Hotel & Country Club The hotel is an elegant Victorian country house, set in 262 acres of grounds on the edge of the Peak District National Park. 148 elegant rooms - extensive leisure facilities - a luxury break!! Excursions: Trafford Centre, Manchester - Peak District - Chatsworth House
Sunday 18th September 2016 PREMIER

ONLY £269 3 NIGHTS HB NEW



WEYMOUTH & DORSET COAST

Hotel: Fairhaven Hotel, Weymouth The Fairhaven is ideally situated on the esplanade overlooking Weymouth Bay with views of the magnificent Jurassic Coastline! - residents lounge - entertainment bar - air conditioned restaurant - lift to all floors. Excursions: Jurassic Coast & Swanage
Friday 23rd September 2016

ONLY £299 4 NIGHTS HB



EASTBOURNE & SOUTH COAST

Hotel: Queens Hotel, Eastbourne This magnificent Victorian hotel is situated in an outstanding position overlooking the pier! Spacious public rooms include a cocktail bar, sun lounge and two restaurants. Eastbourne is one of Britain's more elegant resorts, enjoying a glorious location on the south coast. Excursions: Brighton & Bluebell Railway
Wednesday 28th September 2016

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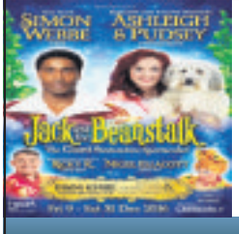
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Monday 31st October '16 £49.50

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